

SPECIAL MEETING NORTH SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 5, 2007

KENDALL-DEAN SCHOOL

7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. and began with the prayer and the pledge to the flag. Council members present were Mr. Keeley, Mr. Leclerc, Mr. Lovett, Mr. Zwolenski and Mrs. Thibault. Town Administrator Lowe was also in attendance. Town Solicitor Hadden arrived later in the evening.

SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

Superintendent of Schools Stephen Lindberg, as well as members of the Planning Committee, presented an update on the School Department's Strategic Plan. This plan establishes a long-range direction for the district and provides a clear focus for future pursuits by setting priorities for improvement.

Dr. Maureen Chevrette, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, spoke of methods to improve student achievement in mathematics, English and science over the next three years.

Mrs. Diane Jolin, Principal of Halliwell School, spoke of establishing a district-wide policy for student attendance and the encouragement of community and parental involvement in the education of the children.

Mr. Eric Butash, Director of Technology, noted the School

Department has built a technology infrastructure and part of the Strategic Plan is to provide and maintain district-wide infrastructure/technology to prepare students for the future.

Mr. David Silva, Principal of North Smithfield High School, spoke about implementing the requirements of the Rhode Island Regents Regulations for High Schools. He noted that, over the past several

November 5, 2007

years, graduation requirements have been restructured to meet certain mandates.

BRANCH RIVER REVITALIZATION PLAN

Mr. Lowe explained that he convened a diversified group of people to form a committee in January to explore an area in town that may provide a larger tax base for the community.

Town Planner Michael Phillips commented that the State of Rhode Island has asked towns to look at local areas and designate them as growth centers. This is what the Comprehensive Plan has done with the Slatersville and Branch Village areas. Traffic patterns are a main reason for looking at Branch Village and he hopes the pedestrian aspects will be improved. Mr. Phillips stated this is a first step towards implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. John Flaherty, Chairman of the Branch River Revitalization Planning Task Force, noted this group was put together in an effort to shape future development in the community. The firms of Horsley Witten Group, Dodson Association and Mullin Associates have been hired to lead the town through this process. Mr. Flaherty emphasized that no one's land would be taken from them; this is to plan for the evolution of this district in the future.

(Mr. Hadden arrived at 7:45 P.M.)

Peter Flinker of Dodson Associates provided a power point presentation that included five development pods: the Village Center, Northwest of the Village Center, Industrial Park, Rail Line and South of Rail Line.

The Village Center included designs for continuous sidewalks, shade trees and other landscaping, decorative lighting, signage and benches. There were also illustrations for on-street parallel parking as well as large shared parking lots on the interior of each block.

Great Road, Northwest of Village Center, would serve as an extension of the village center. The ATP facility would be redeveloped and/or replaced with new mixed-use structures. Large buildings would be divided into smaller masses and stepped along the river bank to take advantage of views.

Buildings in the Branch River Industrial Park would be clustered, campus-style, around shared open space amenities, with parking located to the side and rear of structures. A public square would be established in front of the existing clock tower, and new buildings would be lined up around and connected with sidewalks and landscaped areas. The existing entrance would remain as the primary access point to the industrial park, with a second entrance further to the east. Nearby wetlands, floodplains, ponds and the utility corridor would be utilized as community open space with walking trails, picnic areas and boat launches.

The rail line right of way would be redeveloped for use as a recreational rail trail. Links would be provided to the industrial park and Great Road businesses.

At this point, no definite development concepts exist for the area south of the rail line.

One woman who lived on Great Road was concerned that her property would be taken from her for this project. She was told she would not lose her property and that this project would only happen as an evolution over many years.

Mary Callahan-Cimini requested that Union Village be included as part of the concept.

Planning Board Chairman Joseph Cardello thought it was a great conceptual plan.

A few residents had concerns with water and sewer noting that they have had issues in the past with their property that have yet to be resolved.

November 5, 2007

Gary Ezovski was pleased to see a plan come to fruition that will try to embrace change. Encouraging growth centers will mean more people and he was disappointed no financial model was presented.

Ernest Alter concurred with Mr. Ezovski. He does not want the town to rush into something that may not achieve what is wanted. Mr. Alter does not want the town to neglect viable economic opportunities.

Michael Rapko sympathized with those who do not have sewers and water. He is in the same boat but sees this as an opportunity to do something right. It improves the commercial and retail tax base.

AWARD OF BID RE: TAX EXEMPT MASTER LEASE/PURCHASE PROGRAM

MOTION by Mr. Lovett and seconded by Mr. Keeley to award the bid to Chase Equipment Leasing at the lowest fixed rate of 3.85 percent for five years for fixed assets totaling \$745,000.00, which includes \$500,000.00 for the 2006/2007 budget and \$245,000.00 for the

2007/2008 budget, based upon the recommendations of the Finance Director and the Town Administrator.

The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Keeley, seconded by Mr. Leclerc, and voted unanimously on any aye vote to enter into executive session at 9:12 P.M. pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(A)(2) Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation to discuss Northern RI Private Industry Council vs. the Town of North Smithfield, Macsteel Service Center USA and K. Dulude/Abbey Road LLC Sewer Claim.

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to come out of executive session at 9:39 P.M. and to seal the minutes. No motions were made and no votes were taken.

MACSTEEL SERVICE CENTER USA

MOTION by Mr. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to authorize the Town Solicitor to defend the Town of North Smithfield against a lawsuit filed by Macsteel Service Center USA and to authorize \$150.00 per hour from extraordinary litigation.

MOTION by Mr. Leclerc, seconded by Mr. Keeley, and voted

unanimously on an aye vote to adjourn at 9:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Todd, Town Clerk